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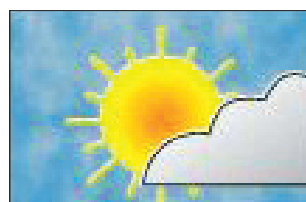
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MONDAY

JANUARY 12, 2009



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AP Photo/Helen Neafsey

A multiple car accident is seen under the Indian Field Road bridge, on exit four of Interstate 95 north in the Cos Cob neighborhood of Greenwich Conn. A car that slid on ice caused the 13-car pileup, sending two people to the hospital and closing the northbound side of I-95 for two hours.

Taser ends standoff

Forty-year-old jailed on numerous charges, warrants

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

A Big Spring man was arrested Saturday morning following a short standoff with local law enforcement officers.

Jesse Martinez, 40, was taken into custody shortly after 7 a.m. Saturday and charged with assault – family violence, resisting arrest, evading arrest and outstanding local warrants.

According to law enforcement officials, the standoff began after officers were called to a residence in the 300 block of Davis Road for a domestic disturbance shortly after 5:30 a.m. Upon arrival, they found Martinez had barricaded himself in a residence at the location and refused to come out, according to Sheriff Stan Parker.

Negotiations between Martinez and deputies with the Howard County Sheriff's Office continued until the Big Spring man agreed to give himself up just after 7:30 a.m.

According to Parker, Martinez came out of the residence, but apparently changed his mind and attempted to go back inside, at which time officers used less-than-lethal bean bag rounds to attempt to subdue the man, but were unsuccessful.

However, a second attempt using a Taser was successful and Martinez was taken into custody at approximately 7:51 a.m., said Parker.

Martinez was taken to Scenic Mountain Medical Center where he was treated and released back into custody, then booked into the Howard County Jail, according to HCSO records.

Northern Plains face frigid storm; en route east, south

By **KANTELE FRANKO**
Associated Press Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Blizzard warnings were posted across the Northern Plains early Monday as a bitterly cold wallop of snow threatens the region, while residents of the Midwest and Northeast dug out after their own tussles with weekend storms.

Arctic air was to dip down from Canada and spread snow into Montana, the Dakotas and Minnesota before marching into the Midwest, South and Northeast by the end of the week.

Parts of the Midwest and Northeast were already trying to handle up to a foot of snow that caused two large vehicle pileups — a 59-vehicle crash in New Hampshire and another in

Connecticut that involved 13 vehicles. There were at least four weekend traffic fatalities.

Most residents in New England heeded the authorities' warnings to stay off roads after the storm dumped up to 9 inches of snow in some areas in Massachusetts and sleet and freezing rain across Rhode Island. Some communities declared snow emergencies to help cleanup crews plow streets.

In New Hampshire, three buses and two tractor-trailer rigs were among 59 vehicles that crashed on snowy Interstate 93, sending a dozen people to hospitals Sunday morning and temporarily shutting down a stretch of the highway's northbound lanes.

None of the injuries were life threatening, but it took emergency

crews about an hour to remove one man from a car wedged under the back of a tractor trailer, Derry Fire Battalion Chief Jack Webb said.

A car that slid on ice caused a 13-car pileup Sunday afternoon near Greenwich, Conn., sending two people to the hospital and closing the northbound side of Interstate 95 for two hours. Police said no serious injuries were reported.

A Maryland teen was killed Sunday when he lost control of his SUV on an icy road and ran into a telephone pole near Union Mills. Authorities in Michigan said a 49-year-old man died when his snowmobile collided with a snow plow Saturday in Dorr Township. Motorists also died Sat-

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Charges dropped against BSHS student

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

A Big Spring High School student was allowed to re-enter classes Monday morning following a month-long investigation into allegations he took a firearm on school property.

LaRay Woodard, 18, a BSHS senior and member of the varsity football squad, was allowed to return to classes after the

Howard County District Attorney's Office announced the charges against him — possession of a firearm in a prohibited location — were dropped late last week.

According to officials with the Big Spring Police Department, officers responded to the high school campus Nov. 25, 2008, as result of a multi-agency investigation into a string of burglaries in Big Spring and Howard County. Police

searched Woodard's vehicle and found a weapon — reportedly a shotgun — in the trunk of the car.

According to District Attorney Hardy Wilkerson, the charges were dropped because of changes to the law that exclude school parking lots.

"The statute has changed in the past

See **WOODARD**, Page 3

Council to discuss sports complex

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

The city of Big Spring will look to plug the last utility gaps in the Roy Anderson Sports Complex Tuesday night, as the city council will consider first reading of several matters.

"We'll be asking the council to approve this easement, which will cinch

up the sewage service to the park," said Assistant City Manager Todd Darden, describing a 20-foot-wide easement that will connect existing city service lines at the Big Spring State Hospital. "We will also be asking for approval of a second easement, approximately 10 feet wide, according to the survey, that will connect the electrical services."

Darden said the pair of easements should help move the \$4.3 million project forward in the coming year.

Construction began in April 2008 and is expected to be completed around September, according to officials with Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, the engineer-

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COMPLETE STORY

State Briefs

Strayhorn to announce run for Austin mayor

AUSTIN (AP) — Former gubernatorial candidate Carole Keeton Strayhorn is running for mayor of Austin — again.

Strayhorn's campaign said Sunday the 69-year-old plans to officially announce her candidacy Monday, three decades after first winning the job before her rise in state politics.

Campaign coordinator Kevin Brown wouldn't elaborate on the announcement, only saying that Strayhorn "will make perfectly clear" Monday why she wants the office again.

Strayhorn served as Austin's first woman mayor from 1977 to 1983. She began her political career as a Democrat, then switched to the GOP before her election to the Texas Railroad Commission and then comptroller.

A self-described "one tough grandma," Strayhorn ran unsuccessfully for governor as an independent candidate in 2006.

Speeding blamed in accident that killed 5

MAGNOLIA (AP) — Excessive speeding was likely the cause of a fiery collision that killed five people and injured two others, authorities said.

The driver of a Chevrolet Cobalt was driving on a state highway in Magnolia at "an extremely high rate of speed" when it collided with a Toyota van Saturday, authorities said.

"The driver of the van probably never saw it coming," said Department of Public Safety Sgt. Angela Fountain.

Four of the five family members traveling in the van were killed. They were identified as: Donald Lee Sexton, 60, of College Station; Curtis Charles Edwards, 78, of Pinehurst; Catherine C. Edwards, 83; and Lloyd Alvin Edwards, 83, of Salina, Okla.

"This is devastating for this family," Fountain said.

Another van passenger, 59-year-old Karla Kay Sexton of College Station, was in serious condition at Memorial Hermann Hospital-The Medical Center on Sunday afternoon, hospital spokeswoman Alejandra Rodriguez said.

Kayla Pratorius, 18, of Magnolia, was a front seat passenger in the Cobalt and was pronounced dead

at the scene.

The driver of the Cobalt was 22-year-old Brandon Lee Ferguson of Magnolia. He was in critical condition Sunday afternoon at Memorial Hermann Hospital-The Medical Center, Rodriguez said.

Fountain said that the investigation is ongoing and they are trying to determine the Cobalt's speed at the time of impact.

UT Dallas college student arrested in throat slashing

RICHARDSON (AP) — University of Texas at Dallas police have arrested a man in an on-campus attack on a woman whose throat was cut.

The victim was attacked on Friday evening as she was working in the Engineering South building. Before she was taken to the hospital, she was able to describe her attacker. A campuswide search was launched.

University officials said that about 45 minutes later, a man called police to say he was the attacker.

John Shaffer, 20, a sophomore computer science major, was arrested at a student housing complex. He remained at Collin County Jail on Sunday, accused of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Bail is set at \$15,000. A jail spokeswoman said Shaffer did not have an attorney listed.

Susan Rogers, a UTD spokeswoman, told The Dallas Morning News for its Sunday online editions that she could not elaborate on the attack, what led to it or the victim's current condition, citing student privacy laws.

She also would not say whether Shaffer and the victim knew each other.

Teen charged with capital murder

WACO (AP) — A 15-year-old boy charged with capital murder in the slaying of a man last week has also been charged with kidnapping a woman and her child last month, authorities said.

The teen was arrested late Friday night in the death of Gregory Lewis, a 48-year-old found shot on a road Tuesday. Lewis had been shot several times in the lower torso but was alive when police arrived. He later died at a local hospital.

The teen, whose name was not released by police because he is a juvenile, was arrested late Friday and is charged with capital murder and two counts

of aggravated kidnapping, said Waco police spokesman Steve Anderson in a story published online Sunday by the Waco Tribune-Herald.

Information on the teen's bond was not immediately available on Sunday.

Anderson said money was taken from Lewis, making the crime a capital offense.

During the shooting investigation, the teen was also linked to the Dec. 29 aggravated kidnapping of a 24-year-old woman and her 2-year-old daughter, Anderson said. He said that the mother and daughter had pulled into an apartment complex when a man approached her car, displayed a pistol and told her to get into the back seat of the car.

As the victim got into the back seat, three other men ran up and got in the car. Anderson said one of the three men also had a pistol.

The men took the woman's purse and drove her to an ATM, telling her that if she didn't withdraw money, they would kill her and her child, Anderson said.

The men dropped the woman and her child off when she couldn't withdraw any cash because her account was empty.

One of the other men allegedly involved in the kidnapping, 20-year-old Clifton Yudell Dobbins, arrested Friday and charged with two counts of aggravated kidnapping, Anderson said.

Mesquite police investigate highway shooting

MESQUITE (AP) — Mesquite police say a 21-year-old driver was shot at least once following a confrontation with occupants of another vehicle and then crashed the van he was driving into the center barrier on U.S. Highway 80.

Mesquite police say that the driver was taken to a Dallas hospital in critical condition. Two passengers suffered minor injuries when the van hit the barrier early Sunday.

Police say the preliminary investigation shows that the occupants of the van were involved in a confrontation with people in a sedan on Interstate 30. Police say that as both vehicles traveled toward the I-30 interchange with U.S. Highway 80, shots were fired from the suspect vehicle.

Police are asking anyone who may have information or witnessed the shooting to contact them.

Gay NH bishop to offer prayer at inaugural event

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The first openly gay Episcopal bishop will offer a prayer at the Lincoln Memorial at an inaugural event for President-elect Barack Obama.

The selection of New Hampshire Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson

for Sunday's event follows weeks of criticism from gay-rights groups over Obama's decision to have the Rev. Rick Warren give the invocation at his Jan. 20 inauguration.

Warren backed the ban on same-sex marriage that passed in his home

state of California on the November ballot.

Robinson said last month the choice of Warren was like a slap in the face. In an interview with the Concord Monitor, he said he doesn't believe Obama invited him in response to the Warren criticism

but said his inclusion won't go unnoticed by the gay and lesbian community.

"It's important for any minority to see themselves represented in some way," Robinson told the newspaper for a story in Monday's editions. "Whether it be a

racial minority, an ethnic minority, or in our case, a sexual minority. Just seeing someone like you up front matters."

Clark Stevens, a spokesman for the inaugural committee, said Robinson was invited because he had

offered his advice to Obama during the campaign and because of his church work.

WOODARD

Continued from Page 1A

several years to specifically exclude school parking lots from what is defined as the

premises," said Wilkerson. "It's a double-edged sword, really. If someone goes to see their child's school performance and lock their firearm in the trunk of the car, that would be considered prudent. However, this will also allow

students and others to keep a weapon in their vehicle, giving them easier access."

Wilkerson said he was not aware of any other charges against Woodard.

School officials confirmed

that Woodard did return to class today.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@big-springherald.com

STORM

Continued from Page 1

urday in Illinois and Indiana.

The snow was a boon to Ohio ski resorts, which called it a stimulus package for their industry.

"We've been in busi-

ness for 47 years and — this is what I can't believe — yesterday was by far the best gross sales day we've ever had," said George Shaffer, area manager of the Alpine Valley ski resort east of Cleveland in Geauga County, where 11 inches of snow fell.

A transportation department worker in

Delaware suffered a broken leg Sunday when an SUV plowed through a section of highway near Wilmington that had been closed because of icy conditions.

The National Weather Service reported 8 inches of snow at Blissfield and Morenci in Michigan, and more than 6 inches of snow fell on

Detroit. The service also issued a winter storm watch across Michigan for Monday night through Tuesday.

The Pacific Northwest remained on alert with three flooded rivers in Washington, where state officials were assessing the damage from heavy rain and melting snow on roads and property.

National Guard troops were deployed in Lewis County, which was one of the state's hardest hit counties by flooding, said Rob Harper, a spokesman for the state division of Emergency Management.

COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1

ing firm hired to oversee the project, which was approved by voters in 2007.

"The construction won't take nearly that long, but it's necessary for us to allow a grow-in period for the grass on the fields," Butch Davis, a representative from PSC, told the council in 2008. "The project should come in at budget for \$4.32 million."

The sports complex won't be the only multi-million dollar project making headway in 2009, as the council is also expected to consider approval of an agreement for sale of property regarding the Hotel Settles project.

"There are three parcels of property — approximately two-and-

a-half lots — near the hotel the Settles Hotel Development Company is wanting to purchase," said Darden. "Two of the lots are across the street from the hotel, and the third one is adjacent to it."

G. Brint Ryan, SHDC manager and Big Spring native, announced plans for a multi-million dollar renovation project in December 2006. According to SHDC officials, the project includes plans for commercial and residential use of the property, with retail space available on the first and second floors.

The project's budget has ballooned from \$12 million to \$20 million since its inception, with abatement of the structure currently under way.

Darden said SHDC has indicated the properties are expected to be devel-

oped as a part of the hotel renovations.

Also during Tuesday's meeting, the council is to entertain a joint election agreement with Big Spring Independent School District and a presentation of the 2010 Census.

The meeting will get

under way at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in the council chambers at 307 E. Fourth St.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

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